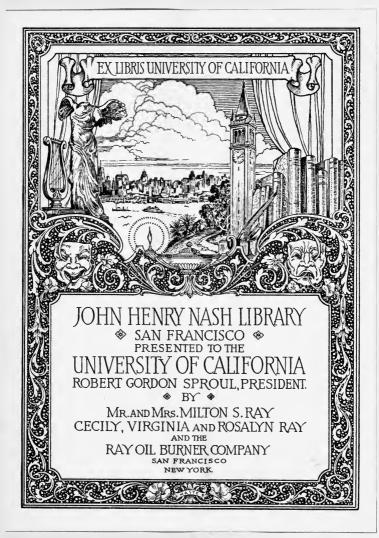
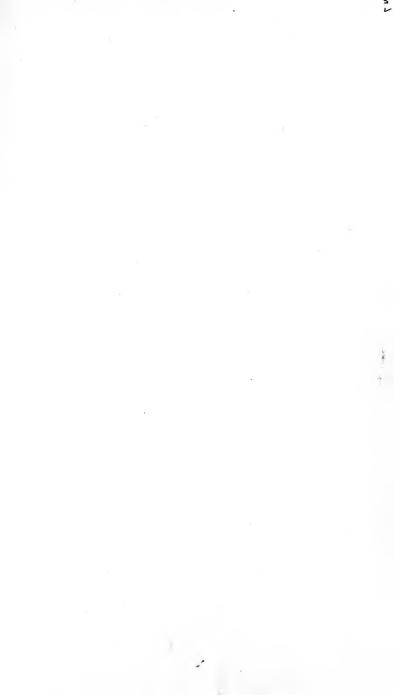
FRIENDSHIP'S OFFERING
THE STORY OF B:W: AND
NICOLETTE ## BY A:E:F





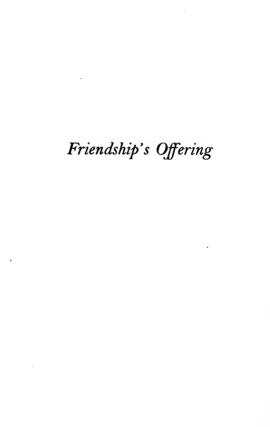
















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"HOW FAR THAT LITTLE CANDLE THROWS HIS BEAMS, SO SHINES A GOOD DEED IN A NAUGHTY WORLD."

If the very angels of heaven were sent to guard and guide him upon his journey, I, for one, should not wonder; for his errand was a blessed one from start to finish. But who was the traveller who might have been so favored? Only a dog. And with what noble mission may such an one as he have been entrusted? Only the rescue of another small creature.

How did I come to know the story? One morning last year I read in my "Daily News" the following paragraph:

A family living in the town of A——, having decided upon a change of residence, departed one morning from their old home, taking with them their dog, but leaving behind the household cat. The second day after their establishment in the new home the dog disappeared, reappearing in a few days accompanied by the cat.

Much impressed by this vouched-for statement, I determined to learn as much as was possible about the, to me, remarkable

incident. This, though I found somewhat difficult of accomplishment as to time and place and some other small details, was rendered more possible by my rather intimate knowledge of the nature, manners and customs and mental equipment of these little creatures generically considered; which knowledge, together with careful and persistent searching, of outward inquiry and inward cogitation, did so lend itself to my inquiries that at length I became possessed of as much as is recorded below of the conception and manner of rescue by B. W. the dog, of Nicolette the cat, through and out of the miles of country lying between the small towns of A and Z, in our own state of Massachusetts.

The preliminary facts I found to be as stated, namely, the family had moved away, taking with them the dog and deserting the cat. The dog went back for the cat, and returned bringing her with him.

So in that family was just one faithful soul. Out of them all,—father, mother and children,—only one really humane creature, and that one the dog! For surely the word

"humane," if it means anything, implies kindness and friendliness and faithfulness.

At the time of the family migration the two creatures had been living together for some months. They had not always been friends. In the very beginning there had undoubtedly been misunderstandings. The one who came last had not been gratified to find the other installed upon his arrival, and this had been expressed in somewhat rude and noisy language and behavior, while the first comer had considered the advent of the second uncalled-for and superfluous. However, occupying somewhat humble capacities in the household economy, their opinions had not been solicited, much less considered and acted upon, and the two found themselves living together side by side, their only chance of happiness lying in the event of their making the best of the situation. So they read the lesson, and had straightway acted upon it, and the blessing of friendship had presently descended upon these humble hearts.

They had grown to be true and trusted friends. This they had not fully realized while all was going well with them. We all have a trick of taking things for granted, and we are occasionally much surprised at the hold which every-day demands have

taken upon us when the surface is disturbed and we see the roots growing and clinging down below.

B. W. was a Scotch terrier of the roughand-ready sort, intelligent, frank, impulsive,

and altogether friendly by nature.

Nicolette was a small black puss, slim and big-eyed; in temper uncertain; in mood of infinite variety; and of engaging though

dissembling ways.

To go on with the tale: B. W., noting Nicolette's absence, resolved to rescue her from the now deserted hearthstone, thereby gathering her into the family fold once more. The project no sooner conceived than he set about its fulfilment. He departed without disclosing his intention, without making his adieux. He was forced to travel somewhat uncertainly and slowly, for the way was unknown and even the direction was to be worked out as he journeyed. But his sense of locality was keen, and the end of the second day brought him within the circle of well-known signs; and very hot and anxious and weary, at a late hour that night, he trotted through the gateway of the old home. And there upon the doorstep sat Nicolette whom he sought! Nico-

lette his friend, in thrall to hunger and perhaps cold, but more than all to homelessness and all unfriendliness.

A heart well shaped for certain poignant pain is hers, as are all those of her kind, and Nicolette's cup of grief had filled to overflowing when, lo! there burst upon her jaundiced vision a Friendly Being. By her blessed ancestors!—gods out of Egypt; of desert and river and air and hearthstone and temple—here was deliverance, for here was B. W! No eye was upon them when thus they met, and when in that first greeting B. W. proffered his affectionate friendship and help and Nicolette's fears and sorrows were assuaged. The Philistines whom B. W. had left behind were not bidden to this sight; they had done that which had for the time counted them out from among the Elect.

B. W.'s happiness in that moment was great, I venture to guess, and being straightforward and sincere, it is easy to believe he cared not who might know it, and that he did then and there express his joy and relief in the dear old-fashioned doggy way, with much tail-wagging and turning and twisting, and talking in his own half-articu-

late and wholly moving language.

And Nicolette, surprised in her grief and loneliness, how did she then comport herself?

When a cat is willing to show the feelings dictated by an honest heart, one variety of its expression may slightly resemble the pleased, tail-wagging, frank and altogether lovely expression of a dog whenever he is not absolutely forced to restrain himself; but such aspect, if ever it does appear, is fleeting in the complex beings of Nicolette's kind. When her deepest feelings are stirred she not infrequently assumes a flippant manner, and when she is light-minded and frivolous she may tear your heart with doleful cries. Indeed, why should she be simple and crude in manner and make-up, with traditions no less than Egyptian! Did Nicolette, forgetful of her affectations and misleading mannerisms and airs and graces, just show herself quite straightforward and grateful?

I am sure the main thing, that she could count upon B. W. to the death, was safely stored away in her little mental or moral receptacle, and I think she knew in that same deep place that she should never cease

to be grateful to him; but I do not find it impossible to think that this knowledge was hidden away from all observers, and that no little trickling stream might be allowed to meander away that should discover its source—even to B. W. himself! Though I will not believe that in that first moment of happy deliverance she did not make courtesy to her deliverer.

And he knew—depend upon him for that! And he was content to be the means under Providence of restoring again to the family this surely beloved, though inadvertently overlooked member; and in some fashion he explained to Nicolette that the old place was forever shorn of its protection and friendly comfort, and that to find home again she must go forth with him to seek it. But B. W., at this point, though he had travelled far, was only at the beginning of his undertaking.

Like others of her tribe, extremely attached to locality and violently opposed to change of residence and association, Nicolette, in yielding up with B. W.'s aid and advice her most tenaciously held convictions, must have performed at this moment within her mind a somewhat radical reor-

ganization. Such a turn-about is not infrequently something of a moral shock, and so it proved in Nicolette's case. Inertia when it is overcome is changed into momentum if one elects to turn into a downward path, and Nicolette thus weighing anchor, chose to sail, I regret to say, the flowery-bordered and swift-descending stream of irresponsibility and freedom.

In this frame of mind she was to start upon her journey; and this fact, together with other causes which will presently appear, will go to show that B. W. had essayed a task which was not without its difficulties, and will explain something of the trials of flesh and spirit which were to be his portion during the next few days.

It was with a happy and unsuspecting heart, however, that he composed himself that night for a much needed rest, believing that all was well with Nicolette, and confident that in starting upon their homeward way all trials and troubles would be left behind. And the next morning with none but pleasant anticipations they fared forth together.

B. W. was single-minded in his desire to trot steadily and soberly toward home-

Nicolette not necessarily so inclined. For to Nicolette, quick to see and feel, impatient of restraint, with endless capacity for amusement, filled to the brim with curiosity, fleet of foot, gay—indeed possessing all these qualities in the proportion to that of other small creatures as nine is to one—to this Nicolette, now emancipated temporarily from ordinary traditions, her imagination excited by the quick-changing phenomena of foreign travel, the next few days presented fearful and disintegrating joys and temptations.

Circumstance, under these conditions, became large with Opportunity, and the most ordinary events and scenes resolved themselves to this light-minded and wandering puss into an endless and intoxicating Giddy-go-round! And Nicolette's will, in face of all these allurements, became as water; and the noble structure of her character for the moment toppled and almost fell. Still, painful as it may be to dwell upon the extreme degree of incompatibility of method between the good B. W. and Nicolette, do not imagine that his experience was all bitter; for besides that happiness that accompanies and keeps pace with the doer of all

good deeds, and in addition to the accustomed pleasure which B. W. experienced in Nicolette's society, there were moments in those days of travel when B. W. extracted joy and true refreshment from the spectacle of Nicolette's astonishing versatility and sustained power. These moments, I have reason to believe, B.W. subsequently looked back upon as more than compensating for those others when he only not quite succumbed to hopeless despair.

In what season they travelled I know not, but if their pilgrimage was in the autumn, when all the leaves on all the trees were descending in golden showers, and scudding and rustling and flying before the wind, then would B. W. have needed grace to endure; for then would Nicolette have been mad with joy, and the wind not fleeter nor more prone to be caught and kept in a straight and narrow path than she, this erstwhile forsaken and pining little cat!

If at such times B. W. forgot himself so far as to administer rebuke, then indeed would time have been lost before pleasant relations were again resumed, and the line of march taken up. "Wigs would have been on the green"—and not all the wigs

would have been Nicolette's.

Many a box on the ear must B. W. have received from the object of this Rescue, though we will venture to guess from tempered paws.

We may hope, too, that their journeying was not at the time of year when little fledgelings are young and tender and have not thoroughly mastered the art of flying, while ill-advised if anxious parent-birds draw the attention of hungry cats to the ineffective skippings and hoppings of their offspring by loud and piercing cries. O Nicolette! Nicolette! "Hast thou named all the birds without a gun?"

And the voice of the locust, and of the innumerable small quarry that fill the summer days and nights with sound,—for all these Nicolette would have been constrained to tarry.

Indeed no season would seem to offer rapid conduct to this mercurial little being; no plan for simple progress not subject to devastation; and it will, I think, plainly be seen that B. W. carried a pack of care upon his pilgrim back.

It would be good to think they purchased and decently paid for their proven-

der by the way, and yet they must have travelled according to scriptural injunction "without purse or scrip." Indeed they may be said to have been constitutionally in-

capable of pockets.

"Men," says Teufelsdroch, "are properly said to be clothed with Authority, clothed with Beauty, with Curses," and clothed, perhaps, with Honesty—why not? Be that as it may,—no doubt good appetites and a somewhat arrogant estimate of individual rights in both; an honest mien on B. W.'s part, and finesse and equal daring in Nicolette, combined to fill the larder.

Short work would have been made of tempting and unguarded lunches, and the rations of many would have been requisitioned as they journeyed along. Accounts would have been run up, I dare say, as in haste they helped themselves and departed, and no man swift enough to stand creditor.

And so passed the days,—B. W., the pilot and guide, faithful, perplexed, anxious, conciliatory; Nicolette, so exasperating, so dishevelled in her manner of proceeding, and yet understanding and estimating the situation as exactly as B. W.

himself. Was ever any creature so changeable in conduct, so fixed in intent!

At length the journey was ended, and it is related that on the third or fourth day after his disappearance B. W., accompanied by Nicolette, walked soberly in at the front door, thus rejoining with his friend the family circle, much to the gratification, if also to the moral confusion, of the members there assembled.

That is the end of the story, but that is not all. The spirit of it lies within,—something sacred if we look at it with singleness of vision, it seems to me; and B. W. is seen as possessing that in his nature whereby we call men children of the Most High. For brotherly love and compassion are the marks of the divine within us. They are virtues by the exercise of which do we all move toward the light.

As to motives — God alone knows us, and He only knows how, through all our striving, we are prone to seek for happiness. But this dog had a simple heart, and it is not for us to ascribe to it other than simple motives.

What was the little rift within the lute of a life with its physical wants all satisfied, and with no needs except those of the body,

—as we so easily say, —with nothing upon which to call except that provision within which we name "blind instinct," that lightest breath of Spirit which, when the body looses it, just joins the breeze and goes wandering—as we say?

What was the unrest that bade him seek? B. W. had no skill in mastering moral precepts,—all he could do was to follow the little glimmering light that was within. But certain it is that in some way or other the clear order came to him, and that he answered, "Here am I, send me."

To B. W. there was a vacant chair, albeit that chair is sure to have been in the warmest and choicest spot upon the hearthstone. The one who must be sought out and brought back was a friend, but one whose appetite may have made many an inroad upon his daily portion, and by whom his cherished bone may many times have been wantonly uncovered and scattered abroad.

Perhaps it was pity that laid low his peace of mind while Nicolette was forsaken, and that bade him seek her. Perhaps B. W. was the Good Samaritan—certainly there had not been lack of those who passed by on the other side.

Perhaps it was as those who were Crusaders of old that B. W. started out, to right the wrong and slay the evil; and if it was, I do not know that the crusade was any less holy because this little knight trotted over the way on his own four feet. If such deeds are worthy in men, then are they so in dogs.

But perhaps the call did not come to him as one of service and rescue, perhaps he was not the Good Samaritan; perhaps he may not be likened to a knight of old; perhaps he went for Nicolette for another reason less heroic, less disinterested,—for he may have gone for her just because he loved and needed his friend. If this only was his motive let us take him gently down from that other high pedestal; and where now shall we put him? Where in our thoughts do we put a man who has need of a friend and comrade; for Nicolette was not a mate after his kind, - she was an equal friend. But however we may interpret B. W.'s deed, by virtue of it there shines in the humble setting of this dog's heart an "inward quality" which all may see. In conceiving and executing his plan for the relief of Nicolette he must have possessed—for his peace of mind-something dangerously near a hu-

man heart and intelligence. No Happy Hunting Ground would now suffice to finish B. W.'s course; now would he find himself an alien and stranger among those whose hearts having been tried are found not wanting.

And who can know that some day "admitted to an equal sky" he will not find his appointed place in some great *ingathering* 

of souls!







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